

Logotherapy

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The term logotherapy comes from the Greek word *logos*, which literally means “meaning.” Logo therapy is meaning-centred psychotherapy based on the assumption that meaning fulfillment in life is the best protection against “emotional instability”. Logotherapy focuses on the future, on the meanings to be fulfilled in the future.

History

The concept of logotherapy was founded by Viktor E Frankl (1905-1997), based on the philosophy of existentialism. He was a neurologist and psychiatrist practicing in Vienna. During World War II, he was in captivity of Nazis and spent 3 years in various concentration camps, including Theresienstadt, Auschwitz and Dachau. Logotherapy is the Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy (the first school is Sigmund Freud’s Psychoanalysis and the second is Alfred Adler’s Individual Psychology).

Basis of Logotherapy

Frankl’s approach is based on three philosophical and psychological concepts:

- Freedom of Will
- Will to Meaning, and
- Meaning in Life

Freedom of Will

The space of shaping one’s own life within the limits of the given possibilities.

Will to Meaning

The search for meaning is seen as the primary motivation of humans. When a person cannot realise his or her “will to meaning” in their lives they will experience an sensation of meaninglessness and emptiness. The frustration of the existential need for meaningful goals will give rise to aggression, addiction, depression and suicidality.

Meaning in Life

Meaning is an objective reality, as opposed to a

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mere illusion arising within the perceptual apparatus of the observer.

Therapeutic Techniques in Logo Therapy

1. Paradoxical Intention: Indicated in compulsive disorders and anxiety in which the client is guided to overcome their obsessions or anxieties by self-distancing and humorous exaggeration, thus breaking the vicious circle of symptom and symptom amplification.
2. Dereflection: Indicated in sexual disorders and sleeplessness in which sensations of anxiousness or sadness will be increased and amplified by self-observation, making them more noticeable. Dereflection breaks this neuroticising circle by drawing the client’s attention away from the symptom or the naturally flowing process.
3. Socratic dialogue: Certain attitudes and expectations may be obstacles to meaning fulfillment which alienate the person from meaningful potentialities. Through this technique, the individual is guided to perceive their unrealistic and counterproductive attitudes and to develop a new outlook that may be a better basis for a fulfilled life.

How Logotherapy Works?

- Helps the clients in detecting their specific and individual meaning,
- Helps in perceiving and removing factors that hinder them in pursuing meaningful goals in their lives,
- Enables clients, in the context of the techniques of Paradoxical Intention and Dereflection, to cope with their symptoms and to regain control and self-determination,
- Assists the individual in realisation of meaningful goals in their lives,
- Provides the client with room for autonomous action even in the face of somatic or psychological illness,
- Guides in achieving the openness and flexibility that will enable the individual to shape their day-to-day lives in a meaningful manner.

Principles of Logotherapy

1. Human being is a composite entity consisting of body, mind, and spirit, each having a specific role.
2. Life has meaning under all circumstances, even the most miserable.
3. People have a will to meaning.
4. People have freedom under all circumstances to activate the will to find meaning.
5. Life has a demand quality to which people must respond if decisions are to be meaningful.
6. Each individual is unique.

References

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